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THE CAMP OF BEVERLOO

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A VISIT

TO THE

CAMP OF BEVERLOO.

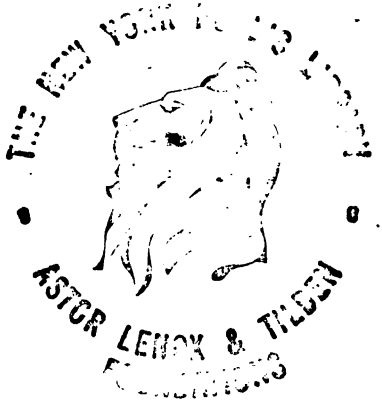
BY

MAJOR H. B. HARVEY, H.P.

MILITARY SECRETARY TO THE RIGHT HON. LIEUT.-GENERAL
LORD FREDERICK FITZCLARENCE, G.C.H.
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE PRESIDENCY OF BOMBAY.

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TO

LIEUT.-GEN. L'OLIVIER,

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE CAMP OF BEVERLOO.

LONDON, *Sept. 8th*, 1852.

MON GÉNÉRAL,

PERMIT me, with every sentiment of respect and esteem, to dedicate to you, as Commander-in-Chief, and to the General Officers, Staff, and other Officers serving under your orders, the following brief and imperfect narrative of my visit to your Camp, during the latter period of the Manœuvres of 1852; and, at the same time, to express my high sense of the hospitable kindness with which I was received, as well as of the courtesy which enabled me to avail myself (as far as the very limited time left at my disposal, previous to my departure for the East, would allow,) of the advantage of all the practical instruction so admirably organized, so ably carried out under your orders, and so liberally and courteously explained, even to a stranger like myself, at the Camp of Beverloo.

I beg your permission to subscribe myself,

In all sincerity and gratitude,

Your attached and faithful servant,

H. B. HARVEY, MAJOR,

Mil^y. Sec^y. to Lieut.-Gen. Rt. Hon. Lord F. Fitzclarence, G.C.H. Commander-in-Chief of Bombay.

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A VISIT

TO

THE CAMP OF BEVERLOO.

PART THE FIRST.

In the hopes of prevailing upon some of my Brother Officers to dedicate to professional pursuits a portion of their leisure time, commonly called Leave of Absence, I am induced to embody the following details of a short, but, to me, most interesting visit, which I was lately enabled to make to the Belgian *permanent* "Camp of Exercise" at Beverloo.

In the first place, let me direct the attention of all who have a real thirst for military knowledge, and who, like myself, have neither superfluous fortune nor superabundant leisure, to the facility with which they can, at a very trifling expense, avail themselves of the means of improvement laid open to them by a friendly nation, which is rapidly and energetically advancing in all the essential branches of the military profession.

From London Bridge, twice a week, steamers start direct for Ostend; the fare being *fifteen shillings*, and the passage occupying from *ten* to *twelve* hours; from Ostend, by taking the 7.15 a.m. train, you arrive at Hasselt at one o'clock the same afternoon; this portion of the journey will cost you sixteen francs (or thirteen shillings and fourpence); you will there have time to dine comfortably at the Table d'Hôte; and at three o'clock the Diligence leaves Hasselt for the Camp at Beverloo, where you will

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find yourself deposited, after four hours of *slow* but *sure* travelling, and at an expense of three francs, ten sous (or about two shillings and eightpence), at the Hôtel du Camp.

The whole journey you will thus find to have cost you one pound eleven shillings; add to this sum the remaining nine shillings for food on the road, and you will have completed the journey from London to Beverloo for TWO POUNDS ! !

On a subsequent visit to the Camp, however, I tried another route—namely, by Louvain and Diest, and of the two I should now recommend the latter, as it affords the opportunity of seeing the Town Hall of Louvain, which, as a specimen of that peculiar style of architecture, stands unique in Europe; as also the Fortress of Diest, which to a professional man is full of interest, on account of the Fortifications at present in course of completion there; and the Military Prison. The country, moreover, is of a less monotonous character, and the road better than the one through Hasselt.

How beneficial would it be to the service generally, and how profitable to Officers individually, were some of them to devote a portion of that time and money now too frequently wasted in attending horse-races, and other idle amusements, to a visit to the Belgian Camp, in order to extend their knowledge of the practical parts of their profession, which, unhappily, they have no opportunity of doing at home to any extent, in the constantly dispersed state of our Army.

Let us therefore hope that the following account may be of use in directing the attention of the *zealous* to this easy, agreeable, and most satisfactory means of enlarging their sphere of useful Military acquirements; whilst, by arousing the curiosity of the lukewarm, in expectation of an amusing excursion, I trust that many of them may be prompted to follow the example of their more ardent "confrères."

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I shall divide my narrative into *two* parts; the first to consist of general observations on the Camp itself; and the second, of the principal Manœuvres I was there present at. My stay at Beverloo was far too short for my own satisfaction, but, nevertheless, of sufficient duration to make me sensible of my own deficiency and want of experience with regard to the more *practical* and *extended* portion of my profession; and to render me anxious to profit by a far less hurried visit at some future period.

I must here observe, that my Excursion was determined by a kind and pressing invitation from an Officer of the Third Regiment of "Chasseurs" (or Light Infantry), whom I had the pleasure and good fortune of meeting some time previously, when he was quartered at Ostend, and to whom I cannot refrain from paying the tribute of remarking, that I have seldom met with any one possessed of more intelligence, or more thoroughly versed in useful *professional detail;* especially on all points connected with the interior economy, discipline, and organization of the Regiments of the Belgian Army.

And here let me venture, as an English Officer deeply sensible of the profound respect and esteem entertained by my nation for King Leopold, to offer, in the name of the glorious Military profession, of which I am a humble, though most zealous member, my sincere and grateful testimony, not only to the efforts which His Majesty has made for its advancement, and for the extension of Military Knowledge, by this admirable nucleus of practical instruction; but also to the liberality with which His Majesty permits Officers belonging to foreign armies to enjoy the high privilege, advantage, and honour of availing themselves of this rich and unique source of Military lore. The Camp of Beverloo, up to this date, is the *only Permanent Camp* in Europe—a circumstance worthy of our utmost attention at the present period; and one calculated to impress upon us the foresight and judgment with which King Leopold has directed, and still

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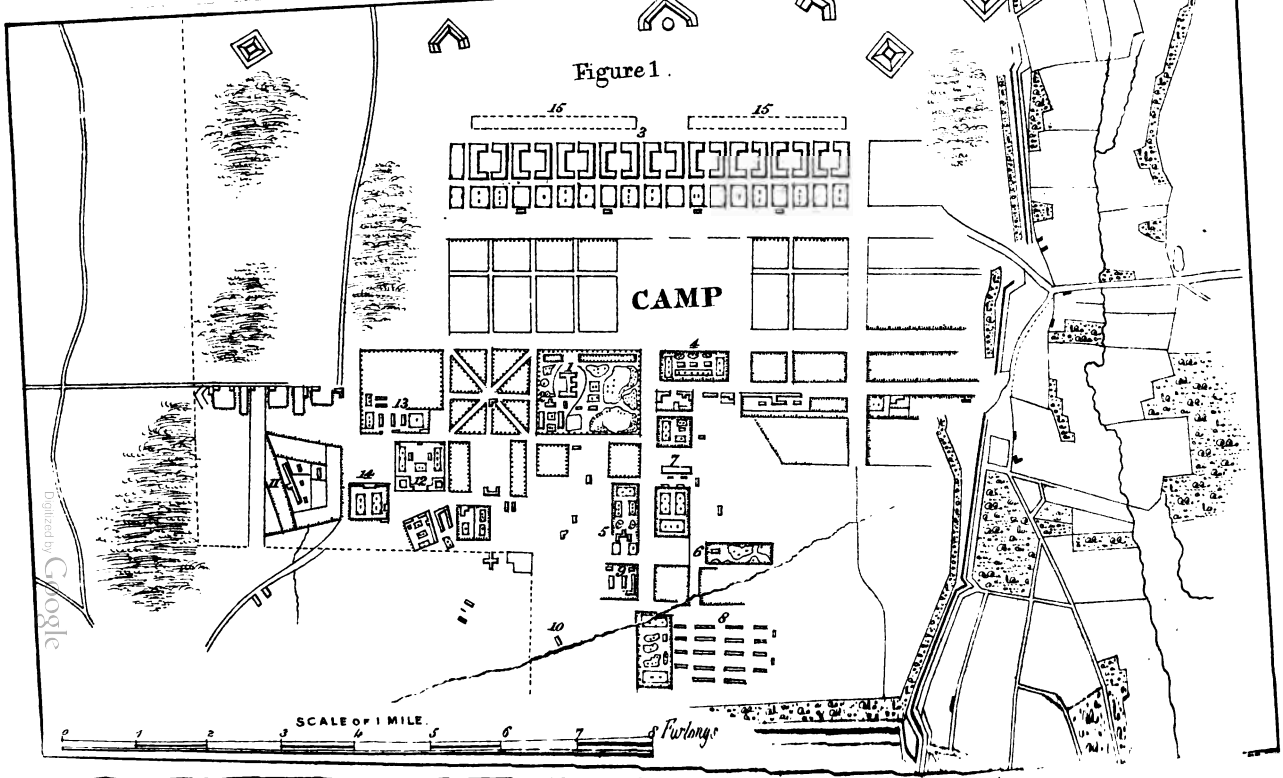
continues to direct, his energies, to rendering his small army equal to any contingency, in thus compensating by superior *quality*, for its inevitable deficiency in *numbers*, as compared with the standing armies of the larger Continental Powers. Surely the example we have in the King of Belgium should not be overlooked, especially by us; and when we reflect that during so many years of political difficulty and danger, surrounded by revolutions, His Majesty has, with equal wisdom of counsel, steadiness of purpose, and soundness of policy, combined with energy, decision, and integrity of character, succeeded, to the admiration of Europe, and of our own nation in particular, in averting from his realms those calamities which have befallen other States, and in preserving his dominions intact, in spite of the efforts of designing anarchists, we cannot but admire his determination to maintain, by force of arms, if necessary, the integrity of a kingdom which his political sagacity and the loyalty of an affectionate people have hitherto so well secured.

I now proceed with the first part of my narrative. Having arrived at the Camp on the evening of Tuesday, the 3rd of August, 1852, I found that the following day (Wednesday) was to be, as they termed it, the "*Repos du Camp*," being the only *idle* day, with the exception of Sunday, during the week. I therefore took advantage of this circumstance, and the good nature and patience of my friend of the Third "Chasseurs," to visit, under his guidance, every part of the Camp.

The Camp of Beverloo is situated in an immense extent of sandy plain, originally devoid of all vegetation but heath, and which stretches from the Meuse on the East in the direction of Antwerp on the West; whilst it is bounded on the North by the frontiers of Holland, extending towards Hasselt on the South. This tract of country presents a combination of the most admirable ground for the exercise of the "*Three Arms*" that can possibly be desired. It embraces a series of Military positions, inter-

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spersed with extensive heath, where an Army of any strength might be manœuvred, and affording such choice and variety of ground as can hardly be conceived. "Défilés," Woods, Rivers, Hills,—enclosed and open country, —Roads practicable for the "Three Arms;" Roads practicable for Infantry alone, marshy ground and sandy soil, and the whole surrounded by a succession of very *widely-spread* villages, where the Troops have the advantage of, and are practised in, the taking up of Cantonments:—in short, as my kind friend justly observed, "Nous avons ici un terrain magnifique, et qui ne laisse rien à desirer."

You may therefore conceive how admirably chosen the site of this Camp has been for the purpose to which it is dedicated—namely, that of practical instruction; and when it is considered that in 1835 the ground it occupies (now an "Oasis" in the Desert) was as barren of all verdure and cultivation as the surrounding heath, whilst its present area offers a park-like appearance, where cultivation has supplanted sterility, and the primitive nature of the "*Indigenes*" has been tempered by civilization; one cannot but be struck with admiration on viewing such evidence of the untiring energy, activity, and skill displayed by a distinguished Officer of the Belgian Army, Colonel Rénard, now Chef d'Etat Major in the Camp, who was selected by the King to fix upon its position; and to whose science as an Engineer the laying-out of the whole of this admirable establishment of practical Military Knowledge has been so judiciously entrusted, and so happily carried out.

The appearance presented by this Camp (see Figure 1)* is that of a "Hutted compound," with extensive tempo-

* References to Figure I.—(1.) Royal Pavilion; (2.) Quarters of the Commander-in-Chief and Staff; (3.) Infantry Quarters; (4.) Ditto General Officers; (5.) Ditto Commanding Engineer; (6.) Ditto Town (or Camp) Majors; (7.) Ditto Sappers and Miners; (8.) Park of Artillery; (9.) Principal Powder Magazine; (10.) Ditto Detached Magazine; (11.) Forage Store; (12.) Hospital; (13.) Horse Infirmary; (14.) Bakery; (15.) Straw Huts for Infantry.

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rary Barracks, Hospitals, and Stabling. The Barracks are of only one story, some built of brick, and others of lath and plaster; accommodating from 25 to 50 or 60 soldiers in each room. The Stables for the Cavalry are large and well ventilated; and are each occupied by about 100 Horses: they are not paved, and the litter of the Horses during the period of their stay in Camp, which generally averages from a month to six weeks, is never removed, but the fresh litter is massed daily above the old: the stables, nevertheless, owing to the flooring of sand, are perfectly fresh, and free from the smell of ammonia; and the Horses appear to be in excellent working condition, of which I had an opportunity of judging during the hard Field-days that took place during my stay.

The Hospitals, also of one story, are admirable for their cleanliness, ventilation, and comfort, and the proportion of sick I found to be very moderate—not 3 per cent.; and but few cases of fever or ophthalmia.

The superior Officers' quarters are, in some instances, of brick, in others of lath and plaster, or thatch. In the centre of the Camp stands a large one-story building of thatch and uprights, designated the "Palais du Roi," occupied by the King during the period of his visits to the Camp, which generally take place at the beginning and end of the season of manœuvres.

The house of the Commander-in-Chief of the Camp, General L'Olivier, situated in the vicinity of that inhabited by His Majesty, is a comfortable tenement of one story. Most of the other Officers' quarters are similarly built, with the exception of the house for the "Colonel du Génie," (or Commanding Engineer,) and that of the "Commandant du Place," the former being a most picturesque residence, in the style of a Swiss châlet, surrounded by shrubberies laid out with great taste.

The extent of the front of the Camp, facing due East, is about twenty minutes walk, or upwards of a mile; its depth about the same. It consists of a line of huts

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constructed of thatch, the front and rear of each hut presenting the figure of a *right-angled triangle* standing on its base. They at present contain 25 men each, affording, however, but limited accommodation for so many; having been originally constructed for a smaller number. Each man is provided with a palliasse and blanket, which are placed on the bare sand; and it was a matter of astonishment to me to see the cleanliness and smartness with which the Third Regiment of "Chasseurs," now occupying these huts, turned out on their private parades for their Colonel's inspection; their arms, accoutrements, and general appearance, in spite of the manifest disadvantages under which the men laboured, from the crowded state of the huts, and sandy nature of their floor, might have vied with that of our own Rifle Regiments on turning out of their comfortable Barracks.

The "Regiment of Grenadiers," corresponding to our "Foot Guards," have the advantage in the Camp of occupying a newly-constructed Barrack, on the extreme left, but to the rear of the front, or line of huts, composed of detached one-story buildings of brick. Their men's rooms, containing 25 each, have two inclined planes, similar to guard-beds, running up their whole length on each side, with a space of about five feet wide in the centre. There is also in their Square, or "*Carré*," as they term it, a Mess-house for the Officers, this Regiment being the only one in the Belgian service having a Mess-establishment, as they generally occupy permanent quarters at Brussels.

The Artillery Stabling, on the same plan as that of the Cavalry, is very good. Their Horses, more especially those of the "Artillerie Légère," answering to our Horse Artillery, are of a strong serviceable description, particularly some roan ones, which they praised much for endurance and activity. The Artillery is parked in rear of the Right Centre of the Camp.

The Regimental Officers' Quarters are generally of lath

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and plaster, and close in rear of the Huts of their respective Corps. The Rooms are very small, and all Officers below the rank of Captain have the "*désagrément*" of being doubled up.

The Force in the Camp consisted of 48 pieces of Field Artillery, or six Batteries, one of which was a 12-pounder battery, the remainder sixes; four Regiments of Cavalry, (two of which, the "Guides" and Lancers, are in Cantonments); and 20 Battalions of Infantry, in all about 15,000 men.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Camp, General L'Olivier, received me with the utmost condescension and kindness. He had, I believe, the honour of being on Marshal Macdonald's Staff, and is a noble specimen of the fine old soldier,—full of energy, activity, zeal, and love of his profession. In him is to be found a rare combination of the "suaviter in modo" with the "fortiter in re." The Officers and men appear to love him, and to consider him in the light of a father to their large and well-disciplined family,—easy of access, frank in manner, and showing to all under him full justice, that soundest basis upon which a Commander-in-Chief can possibly ground his popularity. It would be difficult to pronounce which were most worthy of admiration, General L'Olivier's mode of conducting the interior economy and discipline of the *Camp*, or his workmanlike method of handling his fine young "Corps d'Armée" in the *Field*, where he manœuvred it with as much ease and coquetry as most men would knock about a Battalion; having them so completely in hand, young as they were, as to stamp him a perfect master of the art of moving troops in the field.

His cautionary words of command were given with that decision and clearness of tone and manner, which never fail to inspire confidence in all ranks; and, as his Officers remarked, impressed them with the conviction, that in his hands all manœuvres must infallibly be conducted with certainty and precision.

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Together with this talent for manœuvring, General L'Olivier possesses an intimate knowledge of all the minute minor details of *Drill*, as I had a personal opportunity of witnessing in one instance, with reference to an error committed by one of the Battalions in taking up a position, which he instantaneously rectified himself. I must be allowed to express my humble, but unqualified testimony to the military merits and hospitality of this splendid old soldier. Long may he live to benefit his country's service by the brilliant qualities of his head and heart! That the former are justly appreciated by his Sovereign is evident from the complimentary order addressed to General L'Olivier by the Minister of War on the breaking up of the Camp of Beverloo this season; of the latter I leave my readers to form their own opinion from the General's most soldierlike and affectionate farewell to those who had been serving under him; and I feel sure that no apology is necessary for my inserting both at full length.

From the Minister of War to General L'Olivier.

"GENERAL,—The King has followed, with the most lively interest, the operations which you have had the honour of directing in his presence during three consecutive days.

"The combined movements of the 'Three Arms,' whether considered with reference to their conception or their execution, have elicited, in a most marked manner, the high approbation of his Majesty.

"The steady and military bearing of the Troops, the precision of their movements, and the expressions of loyalty so enthusiastically uttered by them, together with the intelligent and ready co-operation you have met with from Officers of all ranks, at once stamp the enlightened view you have taken of the mission confided to you, and the zeal and skill with which you have accomplished it.

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"Under these circumstances, I deem myself most fortunate in being the channel of communication for the King's sentiments, whereby I am enabled fully to express to you the satisfaction afforded to his Majesty.

(Signed) "ANOUL,
"Minister of War."

To this General Order, General L'Olivier appended the following:—

"This despatch I look upon as addressed to the entire Camp. To your zeal, to your intelligent and most willing co-operation, I owe this flattering expression of his Majesty's high approbation. May this communication of my affection and gratitude follow you to the new stations which have been assigned to you.

"Never shall I forget the Camp of 1852. My most earnest desire would be, to find myself once more at your head, should the necessity ever arise for defending our King and our ancient land of Belgium, both so long paramount in our hearts, as well as those young Princes, who, during two days, have shared our fatigues, and whose brilliant qualities have won all our affection, whilst they are the earnest of such a promising future to our beautiful country.

"Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Soldiers, farewell!

(Signed) "L'OLIVIER,
"Lieut.-Gen.
"Com.-in-Chief of the Troops in Camp.

"Head Quarters, Camp.
30th August, 1852."

I was much struck with the moral and practical results diffused through the Staff by such a combination of excellent qualities in the Commander-in-Chief.

The six General Officers under General L'Olivier were

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men, for the most part, in the prime of life; intelligent, active, and earnest in all professional matters. I found them anxious to give information with equal readiness and patience on all details connected with their different duties in particular, and their service in general. Whilst in the Field, they commanded their respective Divisions and Brigades with that perfect confidence in themselves, so remarkable in their Commander-in-Chief, and which is only attainable by practice. They repeated their *cautionary words* to their *Divisions* and *Brigades* with *precision* and *distinctness*,—the Colonels commanding Battalions, in like manner, accurately repeating first the "*cautionary*," and then, at the signal, giving the "*executive*" command to their respective Regiments; paying particular attention to one most essential point—namely, to observe the difference between the "*cautionary*" and "*executive*" words of command. There was *no bugling* for the performance of the different manœuvres; the General Officers of Divisions keeping their eyes on the COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF,—I speak, of course, of the *Parade*-movements *in the open air*, where the Commander-in-Chief was enabled to be seen and heard by all,—the Brigadiers on the "Divisionnaires," and the Colonels of Regiments on their Brigadiers; by these means securing that uniformity in the execution of the "*parade*"-manœuvres, without which it is impossible to do justice to Troops, especially in large bodies, where precision of parade-movements MUST mainly depend upon the promptness and accuracy with which the different cautionary and executive words of command are *delivered* and *repeated*.

The base of all the changes of "Front" and "Position," was most accurately and easily determined by the Chef d'Etat Major, Colonel Rénard, whose knowledge of his duties as Adjutant-General in the Field was quite as conspicuous as his well-known talents as "Chef d'Etat Major" in matters of official correspondence, plan-drawing, &c.

I had a brilliant treat during my first day's visit to the

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Camp, in hearing the combined Bands of all the Regiments rehearsing various pieces of music, preparatory to the autumnal visit of his Majesty. There were about 250 musicians thus congregated; and the various Bandmasters led in turn, each choosing a "*morçeau*" to be played. I was particularly struck by one piece of music, "*Les Funfares de Chasse*," by Rossini, where the "*Echo*" was most happily imitated by twenty performers, placed in a shubbery at a certain distance from the main body of the united bands, producing an effect at once novel and satisfactory. There certainly exists in Foreign Bands a style of playing, and an "*ensemble*" of harmony and expression we appear quite unable to arrive at with ours. Each performer's soul, as it were, seems to speak through his instrument,—which instrument, by the way, is his own property, and consequently he keeps it in the very best order. But then, we must remember how eminently remarkable is the Belgian nation for the amount of musical talent which it has produced, and still possesses. The Band of the "Grenadier Regiment," or Foot Guards, is certainly superior to *any* Band in our service. It consists of about thirty performers; that of the "Régiment de Guides," or Horse Guards, in Brussels, is, at the present moment, not to be surpassed in Europe, the performers being all men of known talent, and never leaving the capital.

The Arms of the Troops are in excellent order, and the strictest attention is paid to them. The Grenadier Regiment have a very superior weapon, which has the back-lock action; and of which the barrels, like those of a fowling-piece, can be detached from the breech for the purpose of cleaning. I was assured that they hardly ever required repairing, except from the effects of accident or carelessness. The "Carabiniers," or Rifle Regiment, have also an excellent description of Arm, the "Carabine à Tige," carrying a thousand yards. They are allowed as much Ball Practice Ammunition every year as they can

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fire away, and are always practising; the greatest possible attention being directed to the instruction of the men, in order to render them perfect masters of the different ranges. They are also in the habit of placing straw figures at certain distances, at which they commence firing independently, in skirmishing order, at 600 and 700 yards, and advancing up to 400 yards,—the hits at those ranges averaging about 65 in 100. They are also trying the "Minié" Musket in the Camp, and elsewhere. I regret not having had time to witness the Target Practice of the "Carabiniers," as I was informed that it was carried on with astonishing precision at the extreme ranges. But I left Captain Fox, Grenadier Guards, in the Camp, who, having been employed by our own authorities to assist in the trials of the "Minié" Musket, at Enfield and Woolwich, will be able, no doubt, to give accurate information as to what he witnessed of the practice of the "Carabiniers." In my opinion, the assistance of two or three of these Regiments would be exceedingly advantageous in our Cape Warfare, the *Officers* as well as the *men*, being selected for intelligence, activity, endurance, and superior skill as marksmen; and it is my impression that the anxiety which they evince to bring these qualities to the test,—more especially could an opportunity present itself for their so doing, *in connection with our Troops*,—offers a fair earnest of the advantage we might expect to derive from auxiliaries so eminently qualified for that peculiar style of warfare.

When we consider the drawbacks under which the Belgian Army labours from the law of Conscription, how young their Troops generally are, many in their ranks having but three months' service, it becomes *a matter of surprise* to see the precision with which such mere recruits are taught their Drill in so short a period; nor do they appear to me by any means behindhand in organization or discipline. Their great stand-by, being the "Cadres," or

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framework of Non-commissioned Officers, and some few old Soldiers, chosen from 16 Volunteers from each company, and upon whom these raw levies are formed. Without such a base, it were of course a hopeless task to drill and discipline such a continual succession of fresh hands. It has ever been my conviction that our Militia should be embodied upon this principle alone: I mean, a frame-work of the pick of our Line; Non-commissioned Officers, and Soldiers of from five to seven years' service, to form a permanent basis, or reserve force, at the moment most required —viz., when the Militia is called out, instead of employing worn-out Pensioners, who must necessarily be out of the habit of drill; and in whom the essential qualities of energy and activity cannot but be inevitably impaired, rendering them more or less incapable of the duties required of them. If any doubts had existed in my mind as to the application of the system to the Militia Force, they would have been totally dispelled by witnessing its result, as apparent in the Belgian Army, which, in point of fact, is constituted on the principles of a Militia; these Militiamen serving thirty months, that is to say, three summers and two winters.

Drunkenness is rare in the Belgian Army; and, amongst the young Soldiers in the Camp, there appeared to exist a spirit of willingness, cheerfulness, and subordination. I feel confident that, on service, the Belgian Soldier of the present day would be remarkable for his obedience to discipline, and patience under privation and hard work. Of the latter they really have a fair share during their stay in the Camp, where their Field-days last six, seven, and eight hours, over all sorts of difficult ground, five days in the week, and never without their knapsacks on; these being as much part and parcel of a Belgian Soldier's equipment as his coat and belts. Even their so-called "*Jour de Repos*" is fully occupied; the Kits, Arms, &c., of the different Battalions undergoing, on that day, a minute

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inspection, under the superintendence of the different Officers in command of Regiments.

In the evening the Officers in Camp generally assemble at the "Cafés" nearest their quarters, where they smoke their cigars and talk over the day's work—military subjects, of which they never seem to tire, supplying the usual theme of conversation; and about ten o'clock they retire to their respective barracks and huts, there to enjoy what is in reality the *only* "Repos du Camp," and to be in readiness at early dawn (for *all* are stirring at five o'clock), to resume with cheerfulness and energy the daily routine of their active professional existence.

The Officers of the "Etat Major" or Staff, dine together at the Hôtel du Camp. I had ample opportunity of judging of the hospitality of their festive board, and of the cordiality with which, as a British Officer, I was greeted by them. They did me the honour of proposing several enthusiastic toasts to my Sovereign, my Country, and to our Army, which were received with every demonstration of respect, friendship, and kind feeling on their part; and to which, I fear, my want of eloquence in my own language, and my little practice in French declamation, enabled me to make but imperfect replies; although I trust they were accepted in the same spirit of sincerity and earnestness which prompted them.

It was a most gratifying circumstance to me, that two Officers of the Grenadier Guards—Major Ponsonby and Captain Fox—should have happened to be present with me in the Camp, as I feel convinced they will carry back with them impressions most beneficial to themselves, of the various Manœuvres they assisted at; and I trust they will be the means of inducing some of their brother-officers, next year, to visit a spot where true Military Instruction and a Comrade-like feeling of goodwill to our Army so eminently prevail.

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PART THE SECOND.

I now proceed to enumerate the Troops engaged in what is termed the Second period of the Manœuvres of the Camp at Beverloo, and I shall afterwards describe the principles upon which is based, the combination of the three Arms in the Belgian Army, proceeding afterwards to describe the original formation of the Troops in contiguous Quarter-distance Columns, previous to Manœuvring, as well as their Order of Deployment; and, lastly, I shall endeavour briefly to detail the object in view of the Manœuvres at which I was present, and the different movements by which they were carried out.

At the time of my visit, the Troops in Camp consisted of the following Corps and Regiments:

1. 1 Rifle Regiment of 2 Battalions and Staff.
2. 3rd "Chasseurs à Pied" (or Light Infantry Regiment) 3 Battalions and Staff.
3. 3rd Regiment of the Line. 2 Battalions and Staff.
4. 4th ditto, ditto.
5. 5th ditto, ditto.
6. 7th ditto, ditto.
7. 10th ditto, ditto.
8. 12th ditto, ditto.
9. Grenadier Regiment. 3 Battalions and Staff.
10. 2nd Regiment of Lancers. 6 "Escadrons" (or Troops) and Staff.
11. Regiment of "Guides," ditto, ditto.
12. 1st Regiment of "Cuirassiers." 4 "Escadrons" and Staff.

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13. 2nd "Cuirassiers." 4 "Escadrons" and Staff.
14. 1st Regiment of Artillery. 3rd and 4th Batteries of Horse Artillery.
15. 2nd Regiment of Artillery. 7th and 9th mounted Batteries.
16. 3rd Regiment of Artillery. 11th Mounted Battery.
17. 4th Regiment of Artillery. 1st Mounted Battery.
18. 1 Co. Sappers and Miners.
19. 1 Detachment Waggon Train.

Total 20 Battalions of Infantry.
„ 20 Escadrons of Cavalry; and
48 Guns.

These Troops formed the "Corps d'Armée," of which the following is the detail:—

Lieut.-General L'Olivier, Commander-in-Chief.
Colonel Rénard, Chef d'Etat-Major, or Adjutant-Gen.
Colonel de St. Charles, Commanding Officer of Artillery.

INFANTRY.

Two Divisions of 2 Brigades each.

1st Division.

Lieut.-Gen. Borremans, Commanding.
Major Pélerin, Chef d'Etat-Major.

1st Brigade.

1 Battalion of Rifles;
3rd Regiment of Chasseurs à Pied;
12th Regiment of the Line;
Under the command of Major-Gen. Crossé.
Total, 6 Battalions.

2nd Brigade.

7th and 12th Regiments of the Line.
Total, 4 Battalions.
Under the command of Major-Gen. Coussement.

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2nd Division.

Major.-Gen. Fleury Duray, Commanding.
Major Poelking, Chef d'Etat-Major.

1st Brigade.

1 Battalion of Rifles.
3rd and 5th Regiments of the Line.
Total, 5 Battalions.
Under the command of Colonel Lefebreve, of the 3rd Regiment of the Line.

2nd Brigade.

4th Regiment of the Line; and
The Grenadier Regiment.
Total, 5 Battalions.
Under the command of Colonel Van Rode, of the Grenadier Regiment.

CAVALRY.

A Division, consisting of 2 Brigades, under the command of—
Major-Gen. Du Roy.
Major Simons, Chef-d'Etat-Major.

1st Brigade.

2nd Regiment of Lancers; and
The Regiment of "Guides."
Total, 12 "Escadrons."
Under the command of Colonel Lahure, Col. of the Regiment of Guides.

2nd Brigade.

1st and 2nd Regiments of "Cuirassiers."
Total, 8 "Escadrons."
Under the command of Major-Gen. Ablay.

ARTILLERY.

3 Divisions of 2 Batteries each.

1st Division.

3rd and 4th Horse Artillery Batteries; under the command of Major Leurs.

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2nd Division.

7th and 9th Mounted Batteries; under the command of Major Lahure.

3rd Division.

1st and 11th Mounted Batteries; under the command of Major Cornélis.

The Commissariat under the superintendence of Commissary Fouricault; and the Medical Department under Surgeon Kennettenorf, of the 1st Regiment of Artillery.

Such was the constitution and distribution of the force in Camp. I shall now give, in detail, the elementary principles laid down by General L'Olivier, for the combination of the Three Arms, and which were strictly adhered to.

First—With reference to Artillery and Infantry only:—Artillery is never to out-flank the other Arms, but is always to be flanked by them; therefore, whenever it is deemed advisable to direct the Artillery of a Division to support either of the Wings of that Division, the Guns are posted in front of the interval between the Flank Battalions of the Division, and the Battalions *contiguous to them*, in the Divisional formation.

The Artillery are to pay great attention to preserving ample space in their own rear; such space being considered indispensable, not only to enable them to manœuvre with facility, but in order that the Troops in their rear may be beyond the range of the shot directed against the Battery; and with this view, the above-named Flank Battalions form in Columns. The former Right in Front, and the latter Left in Front.

When, as an exception, it is necessary to post the Artillery in Front of the Centre of the Divisional order of formation, the Troops deployed immediately in its Rear, form Quarter distance Column in Rear of the Wings of the two contiguous Battalions on either Flank in order to open an interval equal to the Front of the Battery.

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When the Wings are unsupported, the Artillery is divided between them; when one Wing is supported, the largest portion of the Artillery is posted with it; and the threatened Wing is protected by an Echelon formation of Battalions in Mass, taken from both Lines.

The Companies of "Carabiniers," or Riflemen, attached to each Infantry Division, do not take part in the Brigade manœuvres, but remain at the disposal of the General Officers in command of Divisions, who employ them, in greater or less numbers, according to circumstances.

A Sub-division of a Company of Riflemen is attached to each permanent support of the Divisional Batteries. In the case of rapid changes of position, these Riflemen do not follow the Guns at the "Double," but at the "Quick" time only.

In Marches and Manœuvres preceding an Attack, the Artillery is invariably kept out of sight of the Enemy, either by taking advantage of the undulations of the ground, or by masking its Movements with other Troops, so as to prevent the Enemy, as much as possible, from being aware of its presence, which they should only become sensible of at the moment of the Guns being brought into action against them.

In Positions of Defence, the Batteries form, in Advance of the Line of Infantry, Bastions, of which the Line is, as it were, the connecting Curtain.

When the Enemy has advanced to within Musket Range, the Artillery takes up a position in Rear of the Infantry, ready to protect the Retreat of the Line, or, on the other hand, to be in a position to dash forward, and take advantage of any success.

When acting on the Defensive, the Movements of the Infantry are subordinate to those of the Artillery; but if a Forward Movement is to be made, the Artillery conform to the Movements of the Infantry.

In all Movements, either of Advance or Retreat, under Fire, the Artillery always move in Echelon.

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Artillery and Cavalry.

The principles above laid down for the combined action of Artillery and Infantry, are equally applicable to Cavalry and Artillery when acting together.

The Lines of Heavy Cavalry never charge without having Reserves in Rear of both Wings, if both are threatened; or in the Rear of the unprotected Wing only, should the other be well secured.

The Light Cavalry are employed in watching and outflanking the Lines of Heavy Cavalry. When the latter commence their forward Movement, the former divide themselves on both Flanks, to support the Artillery and threaten the Enemy's Flank.

The Horse Artillery clear the Front for the attack of the Cavalry: but their principal duty is to act on the defensive, and by well-timed and well-executed Flank Movements, to break the Enemy's charge.

When the Heavy Cavalry is formed in two Lines, the "Escadrons," or Troops, of the Second Line form in Column of Half "Escadrons;" the Right "Escadrons" forming up Left in Front, and the Left Right in Front, in order that, should the Charge of the First Line be unsuccessful, large intervals may be left for their passage through the Second Line, through which they may be enabled to Retreat with facility.

When a Charge of Heavy Cavalry has failed, the Enemy's pursuit should be impeded as much as possible by the Horse Artillery posted on each Flank, and by its supporting "Escadrons."

Thus these two arms are destined to afford the Second Line time to Re-form, for the purpose of deploying and resuming the attack in its turn.

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Should the Charge be successful, a Battery of Horse Artillery, with the Flank "Escadrons," immediately pursue the Enemy, supported by the "Escadrons" of the Reserve, who, for this purpose, advance to the front of the Heavy Cavalry.

When a Flank Movement is intended for the purpose of taking the Enemy in reverse, the Corps which is the base of the Movement is protected and covered by a Flank Movement of the Horse Artillery, whose communication with the Wing of the Infantry is secured by "Escadrons" of Cavalry placed in Echelon.

Great care is taken not to post the Artillery supports too near the Guns; on the contrary, these supports are placed at such a distance as to enable the "Escadrons" of which they are composed to increase their pace to any extent during the Charge; and thus cause the whole impetus of such Charge to tell on the enemy at a very short distance in front of the Guns they are protecting. Nevertheless, when these Charges of Lines of Heavy Cavalry commence, the supports move up nearer the Guns, in order to threaten the Enemy's Flank as near as they can approach it.

In attacks by Echelon, the attacking Echelon is always protected by one or two "Escadrons" of Cavalry, formed in Column in rear of its Outward Wing. Its Flank is protected by Horse Artillery, supported by additional "Escadrons" of Cavalry.

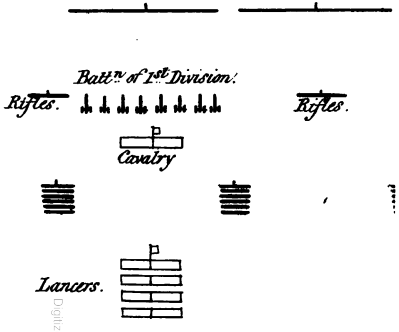
The Artillery posted on the Flanks of the Formation prescribed for Heavy Cavalry, always keep a sufficient interval between themselves and the Heavy Cavalry, to enable the "Escadrons" of the Reserve to advance.

Such are the general principles upon which the combination of the Three Arms is carried out by General L'Olivier's instructions, and under his orders.

I next proceed to describe the original order in which

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the Troops are formed for the purpose of manœuvring, which consists of lines of contiguous Quarter distance Columns, at twenty-four paces between Battalions, and a hundred paces between First and Second Lines. (See Figure 2.) When deployed, the Troops stand in the order shown in Figure 3. (See Figure 3.)

It is to be observed, that in the formation of the Lines of contiguous Columns, the distance between Battalions being twenty-four paces, instead of six paces, as with us, enables the Battalion to wheel at once in any fresh direction.

It will also be perceived, that every Battery of Guns is supported by Companies of Riflemen, armed with the "carabine à tige," and by bodies of Light Cavalry.

Each Battalion of the Second Line is formed opposite to the intervals of twenty-four paces in the First Line.

I shall now endeavour to give the details of the manœuvre I was present at, consisting of the passage of a "Défilé," and of which a rough sketch is appended.

Original Formation: coloured BLACK.

A Corps d'Armée occupying the Camp at Beverloo, was supposed to have received information of the sudden advance of an enemy from Eyndhoven, directing themselves upon Hasselt; and that their Advanced Guard, having arrived at Hechtel, had taken up a position in the Sand Hills of Kamert, to oppose any advance against them. The Corps d'Armée immediately sallied forth from the Camp, and formed in its prescribed order of route; having its two Divisions of Infantry formed in two Lines of contiguous Columns, with an interval of a hundred paces between the Lines, in which order the whole advanced.

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First Manœuvre: coloured CARMINE.

The Commander-in-Chief, finding the Enemy deployed on the Heath, at the foot of the Sand Hills, moved his Force forward to attack them, halted, and deployed his First Line, flanking this Movement by the "Guides" Regiment of Cavalry, and by a Battery which kept in Line with the Deploying Wing.

Second Manœuvre: coloured DARK GREEN.

The General next threw forward his Right, in order to cut off the Enemy from the Wood called Gemeente-bosch; and to enable his Guns to advance nearer to the Sand Hills, which his object in the first place was to attack. This change of Front was covered by five Batteries and two Light Cavalry Regiments.

Third Manœuvre: coloured BISTRE.

On the completion of the last Movement, the Reserve detached itself from the Main Body of the Army, and proceeded in the direction of the extreme verge of the Sand Hills of Hechtel, where they first caught a glimpse of the Enemy's Skirmishers; the three Battalions then advanced in Echelon (see dotted line in Bistre), and their Skirmishers commenced engaging those of the Enemy. These latter, being too widely extended from their base, were soon dislodged, and the Reserve, driving them back from sand-hill to sand-hill, came into action in the hollow, while their Skirmishers were engaged in attacking the surrounding copses. The Enemy, finding himself attacked in Front by the Main Body of the Army, was compelled to reinforce his Centre, which obliged him materially to strip the Sand-hills. This fortunate contingency enabled the Reserve to prosecute their attack, driving the Enemy into a very disadvantageous position, so as to turn his Left, and thus threaten his Rear. The Main Body of the

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Army, meanwhile, made two alternate Advances in Line; a strong force of Artillery, at six hundred yards' distance from the highest Sand-hills, drove the Enemy's Left back upon the Sand-hills, where they annihilated him by a destructive fire of Round Shot and Grape.

Fourth Manœuvre: coloured BLUE.

At this juncture, the Commander-in-Chief decided on surrounding the Sand-hills, in order to cut off the Enemy's line of Retreat by the "Défilé" of Schaps-schoer. He found this object would be best attained by a change of Front, Left forward; and in order to prepare for this movement, cleared the Front of his Left Flank by a general attack of Cavalry, supported by the Horse Artillery Batteries. The Right Wing of the Enemy were, in consequence, compelled to fall back upon the Néthe River, after two sweeping charges of the Heavy Cavalry, between which charges, two troops of the "Guides," and two of the Lancers charged obliquely to their Front.

Fifth Manœuvre: coloured VERMILLION.

The Heavy Cavalry, with a Battery of Horse Artillery, then retired to the Rear of the Left Wing; the Regiment of "Guides" concentrating towards that Wing to cover it during the change of Front, the other Horse Artillery Battery moved up for the same purpose; while the Lancer Regiment took up a position on the Right of the Left Wing, in order to connect it with the Reserve. The two leading Battalions of the First Line then advanced, throwing out a cloud of Skirmishers, and attacking the crest of the Sand-hills; the Enemy, surrounded on all sides by a cross fire, and, being apprehensive that their Retreat would be cut off, fell back towards the "Défilé" of Schaps-schoer, and thence upon the Main Body of their Army.

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Last Manœuvre: coloured LIGHT GREEN.

The five Battalions which had been engaged in driving the Enemy from the sand-hills, halted there, covering their Front with a line of Outposts, for the purpose of securing the strong position of Kamert. The Second Division of Infantry were then ordered to pursue the Enemy beyond the position of Plaesmaer, to prevent his return; the First Brigade of this Division, reinforced by the Regiment of Lancers, accomplished this object, and established its line of Outposts in the Sand-hills of Plaesmaer, throwing forward Picquets of Observation of Cavalry to its Right and Left, to observe the Heath. The Second Brigade halted on this side of the Néthe, establishing a line of Sentries from the Bridge of Sleger-Heide on their Left to the Sentries of the First Division on their Right, detaching, at the same time, two Battalions to occupy the Bridges of Sleger-Heide and Schaps-schoer, whilst the Commander-in-Chief reinforced this Division by a second Battery, to enable them to make a complete defence of the two "Défilés."

Thus terminated this so admirably executed series of manœuvres, which had for object to drive the enemy back through the "Défilé" of Schaps-schoer towards the frontiers of Holland.

I cannot conclude my sketch of this day's manœuvres without expressing to Major-General Fleury Duray my warmest thanks for his kindness in permitting me to accompany him with the First Division, which he commanded, and with which he pushed forward through the "Défilé."

I had thus an opportunity of witnessing the admirable manner in which, under the Major-General's directions, a chain of Outposts was established, composed of Cavalry and Infantry: I personally accompanied him in going round the line of sentries, and was permitted to put

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many questions, probably tedious to him, but most essential for my own information, as to his method of completely protecting his front and flanks. The Regiment of Lancers, under the command of Col. Berten, attached to this Brigade, admirably performed their part—scouring the roads in every direction, and sending in continual reports from their different patrolling parties, their Videttes being posted with consummate judgment and intelligence. Nor can I pass over my astonishment at the energy and rapidity with which the column of Infantry, composed of such young soldiers, pushed forward through a deep sandy "Défilé" of two miles in length; nor how thoroughly they seemed to understand and execute the principles of squeezing as large a front as possible over and through the different obstacles they met with, preserving their original extent of front up to the very last moment, by which means the tail of the column was always in its right place, and not a straggler lagged behind. In short, I never remember to have seen the spirit of General Crauford's Light Division orders for the line of march more rigidly adhered to, or more admirably carried out.

I can only here express my regret that time and circumstances should not permit me to give a detailed account of the other manœuvres at which I was present; more especially with reference to a passage of the Défilé (called Spikelspaede), where I had the advantage of witnessing the accuracy with which two distinct auxiliary columns, representing two "Corps d'Armée," moved from considerable distances on either Flank, over various impediments of ground, and, with admirable calculation as to time, &c., joined the main body at the actual moment of attack, to force the "Défilé."

But, whether in the more pipeclay and parade movements in the open plain, where accuracy and uniformity of execution formed the principal features, and where General L'Olivier's remarkable skill in handling his Troops was so

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conspicuous, or in the more essential movements of a campaign, such as passages of Défilés, combined movements by various columns directed on certain points, Outpost duties, &c., there was an amount of intelligence and practical confidence throughout, which impressed me with the conviction that a small "Corps d'Armée," so well in hand, and so ably commanded, would feel themselves quite a match for a far more numerous, but LESS PRACTISED force. I dwell thus repeatedly upon the *incessant practice* which these Troops have so happily the advantage of, because I consider it the key-stone of success in the hour of need.

There is no time lost in the Belgian Army. A course of military instruction, of every description, of the most practical utility, being unceasingly pursued the whole year round. In winter, when the Troops leave the Camp, their marching out commences, and *their* marches are about 10 miles out and 10 miles in—not a *three hours' expedition* only, as is generally the case with us; and each Officer is required to furnish, once a week, his military report of the country marched over, accompanied by a sketch. They never neglect a single opportunity of brigading their Regiments in the different garrisons; it being a standing order, that Brigade Field-Days should take place regularly twice a week, even where only two Regiments are quartered together. How different, I regret to say, is the system pursued in our service; where, in garrisons which shall be nameless, and where *much* might be done in carrying out practical instruction in the field, we scarcely ever hear of Brigade Days,—perhaps once a month, at the oftenest. Nor do we ever dream of concentrating our few available Troops, which might be effected with such facility, and at so little expense, and would be of such essential benefit to our Army.

In short, we seem to rely wholly on the well-known courage of our Troops, neglecting to render their giant power thoroughly efficient by the benefit of practical in-

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struction, and thus exposing them, in the hour of action, to unnecessary sacrifice of life,—nay, to probable defeat,—unless commanded by a Wellington.

It now remains for me, having arrived at the conclusion of this hurried and imperfect narrative, once more to recommend most earnestly to all my brother Officers, and more especially do I address myself to that class really desirous of professional improvement, not to neglect the opportunity offered to them by the liberality of King Leopold; but to make arrangements to visit the Camp of Beverloo during the future annual periods of manœuvres. I should advise those who can do so without inconvenience to send over a horse, as the Camp affords excellent stabling and forage. Let them apply to the Commander-in-Chief there for permission to be attached to the Staff of one of his General Officers; and, if anxious to improve themselves in the more essential branches of their profession, I will vouch for their being fully able to do so.

Some of our officers are in the habit of plunging at once into the movements of immense masses of Troops, such as are assembled in Austria, Russia, and Prussia, but they err in so doing: for I maintain that with a "Corps d'Armée" outnumbering 14,000 or 15,000 men, they will be unable satisfactorily to follow up the details of the different manœuvres, and they will fail either to comprehend their application, the thorough combination of the three Arms, or the choice of ground.

Once for all, then, my brother Officers, consider the facility with which you can reach the Camp, whether with regard to time or money; and depend upon it that when once there, you will neither be disappointed in your visit, as a professional or a pleasurable one. Should your object be more exclusively professional, you will find your Belgian comrades most willing and anxious to impart all the military knowledge they may themselves possess, and which, I do assure you, is of the highest order; if, on the

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contrary, you be to a certain degree "on pleasure bent," you will meet with a frank hospitality, a generous-hearted welcome, and a truly comrade-like feeling, which, ripening by constant intercourse, may, I trust, by the blessing of Providence, be the means of drawing still closer the international ties of two countries so closely resembling each other in national disposition, manners, customs, manufactures, and habits of industry. To those who take interest in the political and military history of Belgium, let me recommend my esteemed friend, Colonel Rénard's work on this subject, from the time of Cæsar, as calculated to show the antiquity of Belgium, and her growing importance in the scale of nations; and which should add weight to the example she sets us with reference to her Army: an example it were well for our rulers to consider, taking as their reading of the Belgian Motto, "L'Union fait la Force,"—that the union of practical instruction, energy, and talent, constitutes the real strength of armies.

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POSTSCRIPT.

DOVER, *September* 16, 1852.

COMRADES of the British Army, how can I finally take my leave of you, without adverting, however briefly, to the blow which has befallen our country and ourselves!

These parting lines are written from within a few miles of the spot where our common enemy has just closed the earthly career of that paragon of wisdom, energy, and might, the most marvellous genius of modern times, whether in Camp or Council, our great and glorious Chieftain Wellington! — whilst throughout its length and breadth, our sorrowing land heaves, as it were, one deep-drawn sigh.

Wellington is, alas! no more! This great man has departed! Our country has lost her sapient Statesman,— our army its mighty Chief. Where in the hour of danger can we now hope to find such consummate wisdom, forethought, and talent? England basks no longer in her sunshine of security beneath the sheltering prestige of that name of might.

Thus, at one fell swoop, are we cut off from the fountain-head of our strength, both in Council and in War.

Our mines of military talent have, it is true, from time to time furnished metal of surpassing worth; but when can we hope that they will again yield such another priceless gem as Him, our lost Koh-i-nur?

Consider, my Comrades, we may yet live to see a general convulsion of Europe, (though far distant be that day of wrath!) We shall no longer have among us that mightiest of mankind; who, through the political whirlwind, which so long pursued its desolating course, guided

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the bark of our national fame, in safety, glory, and honour, to the haven of a more than thirty years' peace.

Arouse, then, one and all! let the name of Wellington, and his immortal deeds, stimulate us to increased energy, to the lofty resolution to maintain, by every means in our power, in all its immaculate splendour and integrity, the invaluable gift won and bequeathed to us by our illustrious chief—the invincibility of our glorious army!

But, my Comrades, if we would maintain this gift inviolate, the rust of supineness must be first obliterated; and how can this be done more effectually than by following the example of nations whom we behold so wisely and continuously practising, in peace, those elements of military science which must inspire thorough confidence when the storm breaks? Thus alone shall we be enabled to defend our birthright, and uphold our Chief's most sacred legacy.

Comrades of the Army of Belgium! I feel that to call upon you for your heartfelt sympathy with ourselves, under this stunning blow, would be superfluous. We are confident that we already possess your feelings of regret, and that to the utmost extent; for who was it but that immortal Chief, who led us, side by side, to Victory and Glory?

I cannot better conclude this humble tribute to the "great departed," than by citing the following words of one of our most powerful living Writers:—

"It can be no faithlessness to the glorious dead, to place in the highest rank of living fame, that soldiership which stopped a torrent of conquest, swelled with the wreck of Europe, redeemed kingdoms, overthrew, from battlement to foundation, the most powerful military dominion since the days of Rome, and in one consummate victory, hand to hand, tore the sword from the grasp, and the diadem from the brow of Napoleon."

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